(d) Value of exports of Processed Foods during the last 3 years are as under:—

Year	Value (Rs. in lakhs)
1982-83	25,094
1983-84	20,326
1984-85	26,500

Soda Ash

2750. SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have conducted any study so far to see the purpose for which Soda Ash is generally used;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) whether Government are aware that there has been a steep rise in the price of this commodity making it difficult for the small scale traders to carry on their business; and

(d) what was the price of Soda Ash during the last three years, yearwise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF CHEMICALS AND PETROCHEMICALS (SHRI R. K. JAICHANDRA SINGH): (a) While no specific study has been conducted in this regard, uses of Soda Ash are well known.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) Due to spurt in demand of Soda Ash, there were reports of increase in the price of Soda Ash in the domestic market. Government, therefore, allowed imports of Soda Ash under Open General Licence (OGL) at reduced rate of duty. As a result of this, Soda Ash is now available in the domestic market at a reasonable price.

As per available information, the prices of Soda Ash Light of different manufacturers, exclusive of Excise Duty & Sales Tax, as on 1.4.83, 1.4.84 and 1.4.85 ranged between Rs. 1880-2070/-; Rs. 2175-2245/-; Rs. 2324-2994/- per tonne.

Closure of Janupangara post office in Orissa

2706. SHRI GAYA CHAND BHUYAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that DERA Grampanchayat of Rajnagar Block in Cuttak District, Orissa has a population of 7,000 and having 20 villages and wards has only one branch post office since 1972 namely Janupangara post office and that there is no other post office within ten kilometres from this post office;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the Superintendent of Post Offices, Cuttack North Circle has issued a notice to close this post office; and

(c) if so, what are the details thereof and what action Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA): (a) No, Sir. According to the facts available to the Department, Dera Gram Panchayat covers 26 villages including 10 uninhabited villages and the total population according to the 1981 census is 5192. The branch post office at Junapangra was opened on 26.2.1974. There is a post office at a distance of 5 Kms. in Kurunti and another at Gopalpur (Rajnagar), a distance of 6.4 Kms.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The post office was opened on the basis of non-returnable contribution (NRC) offered by Dera Gram Panchayat. Arrears amounting to Rs. 18,845.64 are now due from the Gram Panchayat. A notice has been issued for the recovery of the amount and for closure of the post office in the even of default.

The general policy laid down in respect of post offices opened on NRC basis is that if the financial obligation undertaken by the sponsor is defaulted, the post office may be closed down. However, other relevant factors such as distance from the